



April 16, 2023

Abounding Grace: Belonging Covenant of Grace

Genesis 3:15, Hosea 6:7, Ephesians 1:3-6

For Discussion and Reflection

1. Read the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 7. Can you summarize the following: covenant of works; covenant of grace; two administrations of the covenant of grace (law/gospel).
2. What are the differences between the administration of the covenant of grace in the law (old testament) and the gospel (new testament)? Read Westminster Confession, 7:5,6. How would you summarize the differences between the two administrations of the one covenant of grace? Consider the differences explained in Hebrews 12:18-24.
3. In Ephesians 2:12, Paul says that the Gentiles were excluded from the "covenants of promise." What covenants of promise is he referring to? Consider these: Genesis 3:15, 8:20-22, 12:1-3, 13:14-17, 15:1-6, 16:7-14, 17:1-8, 2 Samuel 7:8-17. How do these covenants of promise expand our understanding of God's covenant of grace? In other words, how are they expressions of the covenant of grace?
4. Read Genesis 2:15-17. What truths does this text reveal by direct statement or by implication? For example, as the sole human and our root ancestor what happens to him affects us all. Or maybe, had he obeyed, he would have continued in his status of not being affected by death (Romans 5:12). What does it teach us about our purpose? Our relationship with God? Death's existence before Adam?
5. Why is God pursuing a relationship with mankind? He doesn't gain anything from a relationship with his creation. He has no need met by his creation. So why pursue us? What does Paul conclude is God's reason for pursuing us, Ephesians 1:3-6?
6. Read Ephesians 1:3-6. Notice the pre-creation statements: "before the foundation of the world," "predestined us for adoption to himself." Secondly, notice that each of these statements is rooted in Christ: "chose us in him," and "predestined...through Jesus Christ." These statements allude to the covenant of grace as an agreement between Father and Son established before creation. Now, we're dealing with mysteries, or things not fully revealed, but what must we acknowledge from these verses?
7. Mankind was created to belong. How do you see that inborn desire manifested in your world? What is the power of belonging? How is evil using that desire? How does God use that desire? How does that desire affect you?
8. What did you learn from today's message? How is the Spirit of God challenging you to respond?